

# An era ends, a search begins

From Page A1

twice the size of WSSU that offers both undergraduate and master's degree programs, is very similar to WSSU. The predominantly black land-grant institution, located just outside of Huntsville, is suffering from shrinking student enrollment, a weak relationship with the local corporate community and a physical plant that needs repairs. The university and the state-supported Alabama university system also are in the process of developing a desegregation plan -- all problems WSSU faced when Covington arrived seven years ago.

The challenges those problems present, Covington said, are the reason he decided to go to Alabama A&M.

"I've never been interested in

continuous mobility," he said. "I've never wanted to be a migrant worker, ... but there are challenges at Alabama A&M that I accept."

Covington, who makes over \$55,000 a year at WSSU, said he was not leaving the school because of money. His new salary at Alabama A&M is \$70,000 annually plus housing, travel and other benefits.

Covington's leaving and leaving so soon presents a number of problems for WSSU. For one, replacements for him will have to be found, one as an interim chancellor, another on a permanent basis.

Davis said he could not speculate on who the board of trustees would nominate to Dr. William Friday, president of the

University of North Carolina system, to fill the position for an interim period. Whether that person will be someone who already works at WSSU or someone from the outside, remains uncertain.

But Davis promised that a decision would be made before Covington leaves on Aug. 20.

Second, the position of vice chancellor for academic affairs, held by Dr. Arnold Lockett before he resigned to return to teaching, has been vacant for almost a year.

Covington said he will not appoint someone to fill that position but will leave the task to the new chancellor and the board of trustees.

"It's inappropriate (for me) to make this appointment since I will not be here to be accountable," Covington said.

Although Covington often has been the target of criticism from some members the university family and segments of the black community, he made no negative comments about the university or Winston-Salem.

Instead, he indicated that he wanted to maintain a relationship with WSSU as well as assist the school in any way he can.

# Unity rally like celebration

From Page A1

The rest of the party's guest list, which included state Sen. Marvin Ward, county Democratic Party Chairman Earline Parmon, aldermen Vivian Burke, Larry Little, Lynne Harpe and Womble, Robert Joyce, County Commissioner Mazie Woodruff, Police Chief Lucius Powell, Fire Chief Lester Ervin and Forsyth Tech president Dr. Bob Greene, were as festive as the party itself.

Said Parmon, chairman of the Forsyth County Democratic Party, "I wish Jesse Helms would just fly over right now. We've

done our in-house fighting and that's over with. This is party unity and we are gonna give them (Republicans) hell on through November."

Although the party was primarily held for entertainment, there was a more serious side to the event.

"The number of white people here today just underscores their realization of how important the black vote will be in November," said Winston-Salem State University Affirmative Action Officer Clifton Graves. "They

have a sincere belief that the black vote in local, state and national elections will be critical for the Democratic Party.

"But the question is, how do we get beyond social affairs to behind closed doors to the decision-making sessions, so, when the deals are cut, we are in on those meetings?"

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## The Chronicle

From Page A1

advertising offices.

"We're asking the community folk to stop by and take a look at the kind of improvements we've made and renew their subscriptions at the same time," says Pitt.

Pitt's wife Elaine, the paper's business manager, remembers when a partition had to be built in the back of the *Chronicle's* first home on Patterson Avenue in order for her husband to have an office. The second-floor office of the *Chronicle* had previously been the headquarters of the local Black Panthers and the building was shared with a church and Dr. O.G. Hairston.

"For what we had," she says, "it wasn't a cramped space."

In those days, the paper had the luxury of one secretary while the full-time reporter, circulation manager, paper-deliverer and editor was Ernest Pitt. Mrs. Pitt worked only on the weekends then.

"Open house is not just a process of coming to see," she says, "but coming to share. There have been people who have supported us all the way from Patterson Avenue."

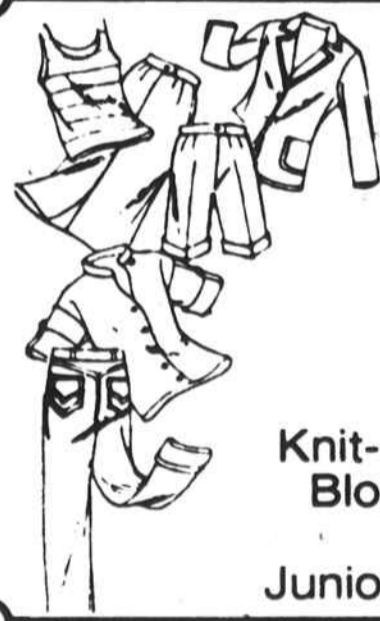
"We don't look at it individually as our progress. It's a matter of sharing it (progress) with the community."

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